



What learning scenarios for virtual worlds and CLIL?

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► To cite this version:

Anne-Laure Foucher, Thierry Chanier, Christine Rodrigues, John Fynn, Aurélie Bayle, et al.. What learning scenarios for virtual worlds and CLIL?. 2011. hal-00600731

HAL Id: hal-00600731

<https://hal.science/hal-00600731>

Preprint submitted on 17 Jun 2011

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What learning scenarios for virtual worlds and CLIL?

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Keywords: CLIL, virtual worlds, language learning, collaborative tasks, intercultural

There is a strong case to be made for using a CLIL approach in the learning of foreign languages: learners are exposed to authentic tasks and authentic samples of language whilst their language needs and interests in their specific fields of study are catered for in a very real way. This would result in learners being given optimum conditions for foreign language learning i.e. where language use is meaningful and also calls upon cognitive operations with real issues at stake (Coyle et al., 2010).

In addition, the use of virtual worlds for foreign language learning is today well researched. Sufficiently so that, in spite of the technical problems that may arise during virtual learning sessions and the cognitive overhead for both learners and teachers entering into these virtual worlds, the following advantages have been recognized:

- reduced apprehension in expressing oneself in the FL (Schwienhorst, 2002) ;
- richness of the target language input thanks to the physical presence of avatars providing verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal data (Schwienhorst, 2002) ;
- the possibility of organizing collaborative group work allowing learner engagement and thus facilitating situated learning based on experience (Dalgarno & Lee, 2010).

Connecting a CLIL approach to virtual worlds would therefore seem fertile in its principle. We would like to show the relevance of this connection whilst insisting, however, on the need for a rigorous learning scenario design which genuinely takes into account the potential advantages of virtual worlds whilst avoiding the pitfalls of language and content integration that has been insufficiently thought out (Coonan, 2003). To do this we will draw on experimentation undertaken in the European project Archi21 where collaborative tasks in the foreign language, set up with a CLIL approach, have been successfully completed by students of Architecture and Design in *Second Life*.

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